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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: MELVIN E SINN
DATE/CASE ID: 24 JUN 2004 200400114

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ALL POSTS FOR PAO, USSOCOM FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: OPRC, KPAO
SUBJECT: WHA GUIDANCE, MAY 6, 2002

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS:

1. WHA PRESS GUIDANCE, MAY 6 (CUBA, VENEZUELA)
 2. OIG PRESS GUIDANCE, MAY 3 (VENEZUELA)
- END SUMMARY.

1. WHA PRESS GUIDANCE, MAY 6, 2002:

-- CUBA: RELEASE OF DISSIDENT VLADIMIRO ROCA --

Q: ANY COMMENTS ON THE RELEASE OF VLADIMIRO ROCA FROM CUBAN PRISON ON SUNDAY?

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A: WE ARE VERY HAPPY FOR VLADIMIRO ROCA AND HIS FAMILY FOR HIS LONG OVERDUE RELEASE.

VLADIMIRO ROCA IS A TRUE CUBAN PATRIOT. WE EXPRESS OUR ADMIRATION FOR HIS COURAGE AND FORTITUDE IN STANDING UP AGAINST THE CUBAN REGIME AND ENDURING AN UNJUST JAIL SENTENCE UNDER DEPLORABLE CONDITIONS, IN CELLS HE DESCRIBED AS "NOT LIKE CELLS IN OTHER PRISONS(MORE LIKE CAGES FOR ANIMALS, WITH VERY LITTLE ROOM."

ROCA AND HIS THREE CO-DEFENDANTS WERE IMPRISONED FOR WRITING A DOCUMENT CRITICIZING CUBA'S LACK OF DEMOCRACY AND CALLING FOR REFORMS. FOR THIS, THEY RECEIVED SENTENCES FROM THREE TO FIVE YEARS.

ROCA'S THREE CO-DEFENDANTS WERE RELEASED IN 2000 WITH A LITTLE OVER HALF THEIR SENTENCES SERVED, AS PERMITTED BY CUBAN LAW. ROCA, HOWEVER, WAS KEPT IN PRISON FOR MORE THAN 1,700 DAYS, ONLY BEING RELEASED 70 DAYS BEFORE HIS RELEASE DATE FROM HIS FIVE-YEAR SENTENCE. UNLIKE HIS CO-DEFENDANTS, HE WAS DENIED WEEKEND FURLOUGHS BEFORE HIS RELEASE. WHILE IMPRISONED, HE WAS ONLY ALLOWED OUT OF HIS SMALL CELL FOR ONE HOUR A DAY AND WAS CONTINUALLY HARASSED BY THE GUARDS, ACCORDING TO HIS WIFE.

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Q: DO YOU CONSIDER ROCA'S RELEASE TO BE A GOODWILL GESTURE?

A: RELEASING SOMEONE WHO WAS UNJUSTLY IMPRISONED SHORTLY BEFORE HIS RELEASE DATE, AND MONTHS AFTER HE WAS ELIGIBLE FOR PAROLE, IS NOT A GOODWILL GESTURE.

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A GOODWILL GESTURE WOULD BE THE RELEASE OF THE SEVERAL HUNDRED OTHER POLITICAL PRISONERS FROM CUBA'S JAILS AND OPENING CUBA'S PRISONS TO INSPECTIONS BY INTERNATIONALLY-RECOGNIZED MONITORS, SUCH AS THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS, AND HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS.

-- VENEZUELA: U.S. SHIP IN WATERS AROUND LA ORCHILA --

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THE REPORT STATING THERE WAS A U.S. SHIP AROUND LA ORCHILA ISLAND?

A: WE HAVE CHECKED WITH ALL OF THE RELEVANT U.S. MILITARY AUTHORITIES AND TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE THERE WERE NO U.S. SHIPS OR MILITARY AIRCRAFT OPERATING NEAR LA ORCHILA ISLAND OR IN VENEZUELAN WATERS OR AIRSPACE DURING THE PERIOD APRIL 11-13.

Q: WHAT ABOUT PRESIDENT CHAVEZ'S CLAIM THAT THERE WAS AN AMERICAN INVOLVED IN AN ASSASSINATION PLOT AGAINST HIM?

A: WE ARE NOT AWARE OF THE BASIS FOR PRESIDENT CHAVEZ'S STATEMENT THAT AN AMERICAN WAS INVOLVED IN AN ASSASSINATION PLOT AGAINST HIM WHICH WAS UNCOVERED IN COSTA RICA. WE TAKE VERY SERIOUSLY ANY REPORTS OF PLANS TO ASSASSINATE FOREIGN LEADERS.

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2. OIG PRESS GUIDANCE, MAY 3, 2002:

-- REVIEW OF DEPARTMENT ACTIVITIES IN VENEZUELA --

Q: ARE THERE ANY REVIEWS UNDERWAY TO LOOK AT THE ACTIONS OF OFFICIALS IN THE DEPARTMENT AND AT THE U.S. EMBASSY IN CARACAS PRIOR TO AND DURING THE FAILED COUP AGAINST VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT HUGO CHAVEZ?

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A: THE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL IS UNDERTAKING A REVIEW OF DEPARTMENT AND EMBASSY ACTIVITIES WITH RESPECT TO THE EVENTS SURROUNDING APRIL 10/11 TO DETERMINE WHETHER THESE ACTIVITIES WERE IN ACCORDANCE WITH U.S. POLICY.

Q: WHY IS THE INSPECTOR GENERAL UNDERTAKING SUCH A REVIEW?

A: THE OIG RECEIVED A REQUEST FROM A MEMBER OF CONGRESS.
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